

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 1930 HOURS

Present: Councillors S Cotter – LLTC
 A Brandham - LLTC
 F Kharawala - LLTC
 K Cursons – LLTC (substituting for C Palmer)
 T Morris – LLTC
 G Perham - CBC
 B Spurr – CBC – in the Chair
 G Tubb – CBC

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio (Town Clerk)
 V Cannon (Head of Economic Development)
 S Sandiford (Committee Officer)
 S Hughes (Community Engagement Manager,
 Central Bedfordshire Council)
 Rev. P. Niemiec (Community Forum Steering
 Group)
 G Borrelli (Chair, LB First)
 B Chandler (Chair, LB Connect)

Members of the Public: 3
Members of the Press: 0

020/LLP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor C Palmer (substituted by Councillor K Cursons), Councillor D Bowater and from Town Council Partnership Officer Jo Martindale.

021/LLP DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to declare any interests, including the nature of those interests, which they had in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

No declarations were made.

022/LLP PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Three members of public and representatives of the “Keep the Buzz in Leighton Buzzard” campaign attended the meeting to present information to the committee (in respect of agenda item 9 – Community Engagement: Biodiversity). Since the campaign start in April 2012, a number of sites had been developed, with the community being instrumental in creating wildlife areas within the town. A significant number of children and adults had been involved and the campaign focussed on raising awareness as well as practical work to

maintain the wildflower sites and orchard. Volunteers expressed a hope that the successful partnership working to date would continue, based on mutual respect and recognition of the contributions made by all parties.

Members of the public were thanked for attending the meeting and for all the hard work undertaken in the creation and maintenance of wildflower and wildlife areas in the parish.

023/LLP MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Partnership Committee meetings held on 18 June 2015 and on 14 July 2015.

Minute reference 011/P (Christmas Lights): clarification was sought as to whether issues with the electricity supply had been addressed. Confirmation was given that the quality of timer switches had been improved and that, pending agreement from some retailers that they were willing to host a Christmas light power supply, work would be undertaken to improve that electricity supply.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnership Committee meetings held on 18 June 2015 and on 14 July 2015 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

The Committee also received the draft minutes of the last Economic Development Sub-Committee meeting, held on 8 January 2015.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Economic Development Sub-Committee meeting held on 8 January 2015 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

024/LLP COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE (BIODIVERSITY)

The Committee received a joint report from officers of both Councils regarding community engagement projects, such as the Regent Street/Miles Avenue community garden in Leighton Buzzard. It was noted that projects had mainly been undertaken on an ad hoc and informal basis to date and proposed that a robust and viable partnership model should be developed, to build on the existing projects and ensure sustainability for the future. It was suggested that a Steering Group be formed, with input from a number of partners, to establish ground rules and terms of engagement, plus develop an annual plan to determine how resources would be allocated across sites.

It was discussed and agreed that the Community Engagement Manager at Central Bedfordshire Council would progress the project further by engaging with potential new partners, authorising project expenditure, creating clear goals and aiming to have a new model in place before the start of the next financial year in April 2016.

RESOLVED to note the report and endorse:

- (i) **A partnership approach to creating biodiversity on small parcels of land within the parish of Leighton-Linslade.**
- (ii) **That the model be led by a Steering Group of partner organisations; contributes to local aspirations for volunteer/resident involvement; is planned, manageable and deliverable, with roles and responsibilities understood and supported prior to the start of the project.**
- (iii) **That £1,000 be reserved by the Partnership Committee to complete current work on existing sites (to be funded from Big Plan Project budget for 2015-2016, budget code 502/4522). Officer S Hughes, Community Engagement Manager at Central Bedfordshire Council, to authorise and track expenditure of these funds, in conjunction with the Town Clerk.**
- (iv) **That a full review of the potential impact these recommendations might have to the Town Council's Grounds and Environmental Services team be undertaken and presented to the Leisure and Community Committee on 2 November 2015 (the outcome from that meeting to be communicated back to the Partnership Committee at its meeting on 17 December 2015).**

Members of the public left the meeting at 1952 hours.

024/LLP CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL UPDATE: TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

Further to the queries raised at the Committee meeting held on 18 June 2015, the Committee received an update report from Central Bedfordshire Council regarding town centre regeneration. This included an update on key projects such as Bridge Meadow, land south of the High Street, alleyways and mews, High Street improvements (buses and taxis), the former cattle market site, the emerging Market Town Regeneration Fund and business rates.

Discussion took place regarding the emerging Central Bedfordshire Market Town Regeneration Fund, due to be presented to the Committee at its next meeting on 22 October 2015. While the exact scope of the programme was not yet known, Committee members were asked to give consideration to potential projects for which a bid for funding could be made. This could potentially encompass existing and previously identified projects, as well as new ideas. It was suggested that best practice in other towns be investigated, particularly other market towns.

It was noted that once the scheme details were known, an extraordinary meeting of the Committee might be required in order to determine next steps. Queries were raised regarding the potential impact on existing, ongoing projects and it was noted that decisions would need to be taken on the allocation of funds moving forward.

In response to specific queries regarding the aspiration to develop land south of the High Street, it was suggested to ask Councillor Nigel Young to attend the

meeting on 22 October 2015 to provide answers. In response to a query regarding ownership of land on this site, it was agreed that a written clarification would be sought from Central Bedfordshire Council and circulated to Committee members.

RESOLVED to note the report.

025/LLP COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

The Committee received a copy of the Committee Objectives and work plan for 2015-2016. It was noted that updates regarding the actions arising from the 2014 residents' survey and information regarding the Purple Flag scheme would be brought to future meetings.

Discussion took place regarding the review of the Tourism Strategy. It was clarified that the strategy sought to promote the town and that current work included the creation of several short videos on different aspects of the town, for example the annual Linslade Canal Festival which attracted thousands of attendees each year. It was anticipated that the theme of tourism would be included within the Market Town Regeneration Fund, so no plans had been confirmed for the review at this point in time.

A query was raised regarding activity to date in respect of tourism/promotion of the town and the outcomes achieved. Information would be circulated to Committee members following the meeting.

It was agreed that the creation of the Splash and Play facility and the temporary beach facility had been highly successful initiatives which drew into the town centre not only local residents but their extended families and friends, as well as visitors from surrounding towns. Thanks were expressed to all those who had been instrumental in the delivery of these projects. Further options such as commercial sponsorship and sale of merchandise were discussed.

It was suggested that further enhancing the offer in respect of family activities could underpin the appeal of Leighton-Linslade as a destination and that best practice and innovative projects in other towns should be investigated.

RESOLVED to note the information.

026/LLP BUSINESS GROUPS UPDATE

Mr B Chandler, on behalf of LB Connect, advised the Committee that the networking group would be celebrating its fifth birthday on 2 October 2015 and that the group continued to enjoy great success in promoting local business.

Mr G Borelli, on behalf of the LB First group, advised the Committee that the Independents' Day initiative in July had proven successful and been well attended. It was anticipated that the initiative would be repeated in 2016 and would most likely take place on the Saturday closest to 4 July. Other projects in which the group had been involved included the "In Bloom" campaign and the Community Engagement Day on 25 August, at which the "shop local" message

had been promoted. Work continued in respect of the organisation of the Christmas Festival Weekend.

RESOLVED to note the information.

027/LLP COMMUNITY FORUM UPDATE

Rev. P Niemiec, on behalf of the Community Forum Steering Group, provided the Committee with information regarding the forthcoming Youth Forum. Three events would be taking place on Wednesday 21 October, one hosted at each Upper School and one at the TACTIC Centre in the late afternoon. It was hoped that more than 400 young people could be engaged with the forum on that day, which would therefore provide valuable information in respect of young people's views about and aspirations for the town. Committee members were encouraged to attend and help facilitate the event if possible.

In advance of the event, an online survey had yielded over 100 responses and this would help inform discussion on the day, with themes such as transport, health, political engagement, business and leisure identified as of interest or concern to young people.

As with the two previously held Community Forum events, it was noted that providing information on outcomes/actions arising from the event would be key. In addition, it was hoped that a Panel could be formed to take live questions and address queries/set expectations on the day itself.

Thanks were expressed to all members of the Steering Group for their hard work and to the officers involved in supporting the Community Forum events.

RESOLVED to note the information.

029/LLP CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

The Committee received information and was asked to consider a recommendation made by the Events Sub-Committee at its meeting held on 25 August 2015, in respect of the annual Christmas Festival event.

RESOLVED to endorse the amended three-year plan relating to the annual Christmas Festival Weekend, with associated budget allocations taken from budget codes 503/4408 (Festival salaries) and 503/4511 (Festival).

RECOMMENDED to the Policy and Finance Committee that the associated increase of £1,000 to the event budget and annual RPI plus 1% (rounded up to the nearest 50p before VAT) to both event and salary budgets, be included in the Town Council budget allocations for 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

The Committee agreed that in addition to the above, options for the generation of additional revenue (for example, sponsorship) should be investigated.

030/LLP BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a budget monitoring report for the period 1 April – 30 June 2015, along with a budget tracking report covering a longer term period and including status updates on ongoing projects and activity.

The Committee agreed that the presentation of the financial data was confusing and that a clearer format was required. It was suggested that no further commitment to new projects should be made until greater information was available on the Market Town Regeneration Fund and projects for this initiative had been identified.

It was suggested that in order to help simplify the budget, the existing budgets of “Town Centre Management” and “Economic Development” be merged into a single Partnership budget, for both current year funds and earmarked reserves.

A query was raised regarding the budget for Big Plan Projects. The Committee requested that further information be provided on any outstanding or ongoing Big Plan projects in order to identify the current and potential future requirements for that budget.

The Committee requested that an additional meeting, solely to discuss budget, be held in the near future, once information could be provided in a clearer format.

In light of the queries raised, the Committee agreed that the majority of recommendations contained within the budget report be noted for the time being and considered again at the budget meeting. In order to not delay work streams any more than was necessary, two resolutions were agreed as outlined below.

RESOLVED to endorse that the “Economic Development” and “Town Centre Management” budgets be combined under one central Partnership budget heading, with sub codes for individual projects, for the current year budget and for earmarked reserves.

RESOLVED to give in principle agreement to the use of current year and Earmarked Reserve Economic Development and Town Centre Management budget funds (503, 504, 9018, 9027 & 9055) in respect of a town-wide cleaning contract, linked to the objective to “work towards improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural vitality of Leighton Buzzard and Linslade”, as outlined in the Committee Terms of Reference.

The meeting closed at 2126 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2015.

Chair

22 OCTOBER 2015

DRAFT